

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

1. Alcohol is a common ingredient in summer activities. It is often inappropriately used by individuals to deal with stress. Soldiers returning from deployment for rest and recuperation or redeployment have been operating under General Order 1. This means that they have not been exposed to alcohol for a long time. Abuse of alcohol and other substances remains a significant problem. Commanders need to maintain an active role in deterring this behavior. Since alcohol and substance abuse often leads to unsafe behavior, a solid program of alcohol education may be one of the most far-reaching safety programs a commander can oversee.

2. The Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) is a comprehensive program that combines prevention education, urinalysis testing, and (for civilian employees) counseling services. These services are designed to strengthen the overall fitness and effectiveness of the Army in Europe and to enhance the combat readiness of personnel and units. The main purpose of ASAP is to eliminate alcohol and other drug abuse. Prevention education will provide current substance-abuse prevention information for all members of the Army in Europe, military and civilian.

3. Alcohol has a debilitating effect on the body and mind. Soldiers and civilians must consider these effects when they put their life, the lives of those they care about, and their careers on the line. Alcohol—

- Dulls judgment and concentration.
- Slows reflexes and increases reaction time.
- Leads to multiple, blurred, and restricted peripheral and night vision.
- Hinders muscle control and coordination.
- Leads to exaggerated emotions.
- Increases drowsiness.

4. The summer season is filled with fun events and social gatherings. Unfortunately, this season also brings with it more drunk drivers on the roadways. Drinking and driving are a lethal combination. Never get behind the wheel of a vehicle after consuming alcohol. Some of the myths about drinking and driving are as follows:

Myth: Coffee can sober up someone who has had too much to drink.

Fact: Only time sobers. It takes about 1 hour to oxidize each drink.

Myth: Hard liquor is more intoxicating than beer or wine.

Fact: A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 12-ounce wine cooler contain the same amount of alcohol and have the same intoxication potential as an ounce-and-a-half of liquor.

Myth: Someone who has had too much to drink will look intoxicated.

Fact: Someone's physical appearance can be misleading. One drink can impair someone's ability to drive. Judgment is the first thing affected when someone has been drinking; important motor skills are next.

5. Responsible party-hosting is key to reducing alcohol-related accidents over the summer. Follow these basic safety tips to prevent injuries when hosting a summer party or picnic:

- Collect car keys when guests arrive.
- Arrange for alternative transportation for unit or organization functions before the function.
- Arrange for designated drivers before the party or allow guests to stay overnight.
- Arrange swimming and boating activities before guests start drinking.
- Always serve food with alcohol. High-protein and high-carbohydrate foods stay in the stomach longer and slow the absorption of alcohol. Foods that are high in protein and carbohydrates include cheeses and meats.
- Offer plenty of nonalcoholic drinks. Keep all drinks—alcoholic or not—away from children.
- Do not force drinks on guests or rush to refill their glasses.
- Provide jiggers or 1-ounce bottle spouts for measuring alcohol in mixed drinks. Guests are less likely to drink excessively when standard measures are used.
- If serving alcoholic punch, use a noncarbonated base, such as fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed faster when it is mixed with carbonation.
- Stop serving alcohol about 2 hours before the party will end. Serve coffee or other nonalcoholic beverages as well as food.

6. Associated with prevention of alcohol abuse are two USAREUR programs that should be communicated to Soldiers, civilians, and family members:

a. Emergency-contact and ride-home programs for Soldiers. These programs provide Soldiers a safety net as required in Army in Europe Command Policy Letter 3. Each unit must ensure that their Soldiers know whom to call when they are at risk. Encourage

Soldiers who need a ride to request one from their unit, the military police, or personnel involved in voluntary community programs.

b. The Army in Europe's "Booze It and Lose It" campaign. This campaign specifically targets drinking drivers both on- and off-post during long holiday weekends. Commanders must emphasize the use of designated drivers to reduce the possibility of Soldiers driving under the influence.